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EAST TIMOR
C.N.R.M.
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF MAUBERE RESISTANCE

Personal Profile of East Timorese Refugee

Vicente Ximenes

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Last week Vicente Ximenes was granted refugee status by the Australian authorities because of the dangers he faced from the Indonesian military occupants of his home land East Timor. The Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas publicly ridiculed Ximenes' claims, saying the Indonesian authorities had no records of Ximenes having ever been imprisoned. Asia Watch, and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid confirmed that Ximenes' name was included in lists of people imprisoned in the wake of the 1991 Dili massacre.

Ximenes, 39 years of age, of Baucau, East Timor, has been closely associated with the East Timor resistance to Indonesian occupation since 1975. He has been able to witnes important episodes of the struggle, obtaining a close personal experience of variuos aspects of the Indonesian rule. He was imprisoned for several months in 1992/1993.

As a building contractor in East Timor, Ximenes felt the need for constant payments of protection moneys to local military leaders in order to be able to operate. This characterises East Timor (and general Indonesian) business activity. He also experienced how the endemic corruption in Indonesia influences the rulings of judges, both in civil and security related legal cases. He has first hand experiences on how the Resistance obtains their weapons supplies purchased from corrupt Indonesian military personnel.

Vicente Ximenes' work for the East Timorese Resistance has allowed him to gain first hand knowledge of the views and goals of many East Timorese leaders, and the tribulations of those captured by the military. He himself was tortured in prison, paid bribes to be released, and bribed his way out of East Timor on a military vessel- a fact dismissed as 'ludicrous' by Alatas, despite its common occurrence.

Ximenes' work as a businessman permitted him close contact with Indonesian leaders in East Timor, allowing him to obtain close insights into their way of dealing with the East Timorese, particularly their extortion of entrepreneurs of ethnic Chinese origin.

Vicente Ximenes is a valuable and articulate source of comment on the current situation in this unhappy land.

In particular, he could give further insights into topical issues such as:

* The first and subsequent Dili Massacres of November 1991: public figures aware of the later massacres which could be asked for comment.
* Corruption in the Indonesian armed forces: sale of grenades, ammunition, extortion of protection moneys from civilians -primarily of Chinese ethnic origin- by military commanders and police.
* Corruption in the legal and prisons systems: buying judges and wardens.
* Use of Sky Hawk and other British supplied weapons against the civilian population.
* The role of Indonesian Chinese father Marcus Wanandi in the Church in East Timor.

Vicente Ximenes is fluent in Portuguese and Bahasa Indonesia